

1 Mike Arias (CSB #115385)  
mike@asstlawyers.com  
2 Alfredo Torrijos (CSB #222458)  
alfredo@asstlawyers.com  
3 **ARIAS SANGUINETTI WANT & TORRIJOS, LLP**  
6701 Center Drive West, 14th Floor  
4 Los Angeles, California 90045  
Telephone: (310) 844-9696  
5 Facsimile: (310) 861-0168

6 Steven L. Woodrow\*  
swoodrow@woodrowpeluso.com  
7 Patrick H. Peluso\*  
ppeluso@woodrowpeluso.com  
8 Taylor T. Smith\*  
tsmith@woodrowpeluso.com  
9 **WOODROW & PELUSO, LLC**  
3900 E. Mexico Avenue, Suite 300  
10 Denver, Colorado 80210  
Telephone: (720) 216-0675  
11 Facsimile: (303) 927-0809

12 *\*Pro Hac Vice*

13 *Attorneys for Plaintiff and the Putative Class*

14 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**

15 **CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, WESTERN DIVISION**

16 **Edwardo Munoz**, individually and on  
17 behalf of all others similarly situated,

18 Plaintiff,

19 v.  
20

21 **7-Eleven, Inc.**, a Texas corporation,

22 Defendant.  
23

Case No. 2:18-cv-03893-RGK-AGR

**PLAINTIFF'S NOTICE OF  
MOTION AND MOTION FOR  
REVIEW OF MAGISTRATE  
JUDGE'S MINUTE ORDER  
(DKT. 56)**

*[Filed concurrently with [Proposed]  
Order]*

Date: April 22, 2019

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Judge: Hon. R. Gary Klausner

Place: Courtroom 850

Complaint Filed: May 9, 2018



1 6701 Center Drive West, 14th Floor  
2 Los Angeles, California 90045  
3 Telephone: (310) 844-9696  
4 Facsimile: (310) 861-0168

5 Steven L. Woodrow\*  
6 swoodrow@woodrowpeluso.com  
7 Patrick H. Peluso\*  
8 ppeluso@woodrowpeluso.com  
9 Taylor T. Smith\*  
10 tsmith@woodrowpeluso.com  
11 **WOODROW & PELUSO, LLC**  
12 3900 East Mexico Avenue, Suite 300  
13 Denver, Colorado 80210  
14 Telephone: (720) 213-0675  
15 Facsimile: (303) 927-0809

16  
17  
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*\*Pro Hac Vice*

## MEMORANDUM OF POINTS AND AUTHORITIES

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Court should reverse Magistrate Judge Rosenberg’s Minute Order denying Plaintiff’s request that Defendant 7-Eleven, Inc. (“Defendant” or “7-Eleven”) provide class member contact information to his counsel. In her Minute Order, Magistrate Judge Rosenberg cites to the “burden” that *Belaire-West* notice would present as disproportionate to the needs of the case. However, as explained below, the *Belaire-West* standard is not implicated by this action. The notice referred to in the Minute Order is a state court standard for California laws and cases—the present action is a federal question, brought in federal court, which seeks relief for applicants nationwide. Further, the *Belaire-West* notice concern arises routinely in cases of pre-certification discovery. Here, however, the class and subclass have been certified. Likewise, because 7-Eleven must compile class member contact information to provide to the administrator, providing the same information to Plaintiff’s counsel will impose no burden. Accordingly, Plaintiff asks the Court to review and ultimately reverse Magistrate Judge Rosenberg’s Minute Order denying Plaintiff’s request.

### **II. ARGUMENT**

#### **A. The *Belaire-West* Notice Is A State Court Standard Inapplicable To The Present Action—The Classes Have Been Certified, And The Claims Present A Federal Question.**

In her Minute Order denying Munoz’s request, Judge Rosenberg determined that the request for class member contact information was “outweighed by the burden of any *Belaire-West* notice” that the disclosure would supposedly require. (Dkt. 56, at 2.) However, the *Belaire-West* notice standard is a pre-certification, California state court standard that is inapplicable to the present action. As such,

1 disclosure of the class members contact information does not impose any notice  
2 burden. Thus, the Court should reverse the Magistrate Judge’s Minute Order.

3 As early as 2007, the California courts recognized that seeking contact  
4 information for potential class members could interfere with their right to privacy,  
5 albeit in a manner less serious than with sensitive information (e.g. medical  
6 history). *Pioneer Electronics (USA), Inc. v. Superior Court*, 150 P.3d 198, 205 (Cal.  
7 2007). In *Belaire-West*, the California Court of Appeal reiterated this point, finding  
8 that contact information deserves some privacy protection. *Belaire-West*  
9 *Landscape, Inc. v. Superior Court*, 57 Cal.Rptr.3d 197, 202 (Cal. Ct. App. 2007).  
10 However, because contact information is “not particularly sensitive,” providing the  
11 putative class members with written notice and an opportunity to opt-out of the  
12 disclosure is sufficient to protect their privacy. *Id.* at 203. This notice/opt-out  
13 procedure is what Judge Rosenberg referred to as *Belaire-West* notice. (See Dkt. 56,  
14 at 2.)

15 Appropriate as such notice may have been in *Pioneer* and *Belaire-West*, it is  
16 inapplicable to the present action as a result of several key distinctions. First, the  
17 right to privacy at issue in *Belaire-West* is a state privilege—thus, the notice  
18 standard is rooted entirely in California state court and state law proceedings. *See*  
19 *Pioneer*, 150 P.3d at 199–200; *Belaire-West*, 57 Cal.Rptr.3d at 198; *Crab Addison,*  
20 *Inc. v. Superior Court*, 87 Cal.Rptr.3d 400, 402 (Cal. Ct. App. 2008). The third-  
21 party privacy rights at issue do not represent a federally-recognized privilege; to the  
22 extent that federal district courts have accepted these privacy rights, they do so as a  
23 matter of applying *state* laws and privileges when federal jurisdiction is based on  
24 diversity of citizenship. *Bright v. Dennis Garberg and Assoc., Inc.*, No. CV 10-  
25 7933 AHM(JCX), 2011 WL 13150146, at \*6 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 15, 2011) (“Third  
26 party privacy is a state recognized privilege applicable in a federal action based on  
27 diversity jurisdiction.”); *see also, e.g., Goro v. Flowers Foods, Inc.*, No. 17-cv-

02580-JLS-JLB, 2018 WL 3956018, at \*2 (S.D. Cal. Aug. 17, 2018); *Martin v. Sysco Corp.*, No. 1:16-cv-00990-DAD-SAB, 2017 WL 4517819, at \*4 (E.D. Cal. Oct. 10, 2017); *Sandres v. Corrections Corp of Am.*, No. 1:09-cv-01609 OWW JLT, 2011 WL 475068, at \*2 (E.D. Cal. Feb. 4, 2011); *Hill v. Eddie Bauer*, 242 F.R.D. 556, 562 (C.D. Cal. 2007).

In the present case, state law and state privileges are inappropriate because Plaintiff's case is based on federal question jurisdiction. (Am. Compl., dkt. 23 at ¶ 10.) Munoz brings this action under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, a federal statute. (*Id.*) Further, Plaintiff seeks relief for himself and "[a]ll persons in the United States" who were subjected to the same unlawful practice by 7-Eleven.<sup>1</sup> (*Id.* ¶ 21.) Munoz seeks relief in federal court, on behalf of a nationwide class of applicants and employees, for violation of a federal statute. Accordingly, California's state privilege for third-party privacy—and the *Belaire-West* notice that such privilege entails—are inapplicable to this case.

Additionally, Plaintiff's request is distinguishable from the requests made in *Belaire-West* and related cases. In both *Pioneer* and *Belaire-West*, the request for contact information was a part of *precertification* discovery, relating to *putative* class members. *Pioneer*, 150 P.3d at 201; *Belaire-West*, 57 Cal.Rptr.3d at 198. The same is true for cases that have followed. *See, e.g., Hill*, 242 F.R.D. at 563; *Crab Addison*, 87 Cal.Rptr.3d at 402; *Martin*, 2017 WL 4517819, at \*3. This distinction is important because, rather than searching for potential clients or claims, the contact information Plaintiff seeks is limited to *actual* class members—the class and subclass have been certified, which means that the rights of these applicants will be determined in this case.

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<sup>1</sup> Plaintiff also seeks relief under California law for a subclass of California residents. (Am. Compl. ¶ 21.) However, the claim is before the Court as a function of supplemental jurisdiction—diversity jurisdiction is not implicated. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1367(a).

1 Unlike the cases in which *Belaire-West* notice was appropriate to temper  
 2 precertification searches for potential claimants, the contact information Plaintiff  
 3 seeks will be used to verify class membership and, if necessary, to contact them  
 4 regarding relevant information they may possess regarding potential defenses 7-  
 5 Eleven may assert. “In a class action, fellow class members are potential percipient  
 6 witnesses to alleged illegalities, and it is on that basis that their contact information  
 7 becomes relevant.” *Williams v. Superior Court*, 398 P.3d 69, 80 (Cal. 2017). Even  
 8 if the *Belaire-West* notice standard were appropriate in a federal question case  
 9 (which it is not), California courts have recognized that the opt-out notice is not  
 10 suitable for a certified class: “a percipient witness’s willingness to participate in  
 11 civil discovery has never been considered relevant—witnesses may be compelled to  
 12 appear and testify whether they want to or not.” *Puerto v. Superior Court*, 70  
 13 Cal.Rptr.3d 701, 708 (Cal. Ct. App. 2008).

14 Magistrate Judge Rosenberg’s denial of Munoz’s request on the basis of the  
 15 “burden” that *Belaire-West* notice would create was made in error. The notice is  
 16 based on a state-recognized privilege that is inapplicable to this case. Further, even  
 17 if it were germane to Plaintiff’s cause of action, the contact information is not  
 18 sought for precertification discovery and thus does not warrant *Belaire-West* notice.  
 19 Accordingly, the Court should reverse Judge Rosenberg’s Minute Order denying  
 20 disclosure of his fellow class members’ contact information.

21 **B. Disclosing contact information of the certified classes to Plaintiff**  
 22 **poses no burden to 7-Eleven.**

23 Because *Belaire-West* notice is not necessary or applicable to the disclosure  
 24 that Munoz seeks, there is no identifiable burden to justify denying Plaintiff’s  
 25 request. Thus, Judge Rosenberg’s decision to withhold class member contact  
 26 information from Plaintiff lacks basis, and it should be reversed.



1 As explained above, at this stage in the case, disclosure of class member  
2 identities and contact information to Plaintiff and his counsel does not implicate the  
3 privacy concerns identified in cases like *Pioneer* and *Belaire-West*. The Court  
4 certified the classes on October 18, 2018. (Dkt. 43.) Consequently, Plaintiff and his  
5 counsel are responsible for fairly and adequately litigating on behalf of all class  
6 members—currently estimated at tens of thousands of job applicants across the  
7 country. In order to best represent the class, Plaintiff has asked 7-Eleven to provide  
8 contact information for the class members, which will, among other things, enable  
9 the verification of class membership.

10 Plaintiff's request creates no burden for 7-Eleven. As a result of the Proposed  
11 Notice Plan,<sup>2</sup> 7-Eleven is already required to provide contact information for the  
12 class members to the administrator tasked with disseminating notice. In other  
13 words, Plaintiff is merely requesting that 7-Eleven provide to his counsel the same  
14 document that will be provided to the third-party administrator.

15 Magistrate Judge Rosenberg has provided no meaningful grounds to support  
16 withholding this information from Plaintiff, particularly when it will enable him and  
17 his counsel to better represent and pursue the interests of the class.

### 18 **III. CONCLUSION**

19 The Minute Order denying Plaintiff's request should be reversed. The cited  
20 *Belaire-West* notice that would supposedly outweigh any need for class member  
21 information is plainly inapplicable to this action, and it is the only justification that  
22 Judge Rosenberg provided in her Order. 7-Eleven has already agreed to provide  
23 such information to the settlement administrator, and providing the same  
24 information to Plaintiff and his counsel will impose no burden on any party.

25  
26  
27 <sup>2</sup> The Proposed Notice Plan was approved by the Court on February 12, 2019. (Dkt.  
28 50.)



1 Accordingly, the Court should reverse the Minute Order, grant Plaintiff's request,  
2 and award any such relief as it deems necessary and just.

3  
4 Respectfully Submitted,

5 **EDUARDO MUNOZ**, individually and on  
6 behalf of all others similarly situated,

7 Dated: March 19, 2019

8 By: /s/ Patrick H. Peluso  
One of Plaintiff's Attorneys

9 Mike Arias (CSB #115385)

10 mike@asstlawyers.com

11 Alfredo Torrijos (CSB #222458)

12 alfredo@asstlawyers.com

13 **ARIAS SANGUINETTI WANG &  
TORRIJOS, LLP**

14 6701 Center Drive West, 14th Floor  
Los Angeles, California 90045

15 Telephone: (310) 844-9696

16 Facsimile: (310) 861-0168

17 Steven L. Woodrow\*

18 swoodrow@woodrowpeluso.com

19 Patrick H. Peluso\*

20 ppeluso@woodrowpeluso.com

21 Taylor T. Smith\*

22 tsmith@woodrowpeluso.com

23 **WOODROW & PELUSO, LLC**

24 3900 East Mexico Avenue, Suite 300  
Denver, Colorado 80210

25 Telephone: (720) 213-0675

26 Facsimile: (303) 927-0809

27 \*Pro Hac Vice  
28

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

The undersigned hereby certifies that a true and correct copy of the above titled document was served upon counsel of record by filing such papers via the Court's ECF system on March 19, 2019.

/s/ Patrick H. Peluso